

It remains for further and more extended examination to show us with what external characters these various modifications of the sternum accord, and with what degree of constancy. The foregoing investigations, however, lead us to the conclusion that any considerable difference in external characters is accompanied with some modification or other in the form of the sternum.

And now I can readily fancy that, if any of the readers of this Magazine have taken the trouble to follow me to this point, they will be rather likely to exclaim, "Why all this about a Blackbird and a Thrush? for it is of them that chief mention is made, and it could scarcely be worth while to take up so much space about such very common species: surely we did not want to hear so much about them." Let me assure them that they are mistaken. If they are genuine zoologists they *do* want to hear all this and a great deal more, but in a more extended and better digested form than I have been able to give it, and with a more general knowledge of the method of working it out than I possess.

In order to arrive at a definite and truthful conclusion in a question like the one I have here propounded, it is absolutely necessary that we go through a great amount of laborious and minute comparison of part with part of many species before we can safely generalize; and the commonest species will furnish materials of value quite equal to what we can obtain of the rarer ones, with this striking advantage—that we can readily multiply our opportunities of investigation, and thereby prune away errors that are sure to find their way into restricted labours, even of the most watchful. And, besides, the commoner the species, the easier it is for every one to corroborate or refute what has been advanced.

XXXVII.—*List of Birds of Prey received from Beyrout.*

By JOHN HENRY GURNEY, M.P., F.Z.S.

THE following is a list of Birds of prey, of which specimens collected in Syria have recently been sent to me by Mr. Louis Laurretta of Beyrout. I may, perhaps, be allowed to add that

Mr. Lauretta is happy to undertake commissions for the collection of Syrian specimens of zoology and geology, and also of objects of antiquarian interest, and that the ornithological commissions with which I have entrusted him have been executed to my satisfaction.

The Raptorial species which I have received from Beyrout through Mr. Lauretta are—

1. *GYPS FULVUS* (Gmel.). (Griffon Vulture.)
2. *NEOPHRON PERCNOPTERUS* (Linn.). (Egyptian Vulture.)
3. *AQUILA NÆVIA* (Gmel.). (Spotted Eagle.)

The specimen sent belongs to the smaller race, the true *Aquila nævia*, as distinguished from the larger race which inhabits the vicinity of the Caspian Sea as well as southern parts of Eastern Europe and Western Asia, and to which Pallas gave the specific name of *clanga*.

4. *AQUILA PENNATA* (Gmel.). (Booted Eagle.)
5. *CIRCAËTUS GALLICUS* (Gmel.). (European Harrier-Eagle.)
6. *BUTEO TACHARDUS* (Daud.). (Tachard Buzzard.)
7. *PERNIS APIVORUS* (Linn.). (European Honey-Pern.)
8. *TINNUNCULUS ALAUDARIUS* (Gmel.). (British Kestrel.)
9. *HYPOTRIORCHIS SUBBUTEO* (Linn.). (British Hobly.)
10. *FALCO PEREGRINUS* (Linn.). (Peregrine Falcon.)
11. *ACCIPITER SPHENURUS** (Rüpp.). (Rüppell's Sparrow-hawk.)

This is the first instance which has come under my notice, of the occurrence of this species beyond the limits of the African continent. The collection contained five examples, in different states of plumage.

12. *CIRCUS SWAINSONI* (Smith). (Swainson's Harrier.)

* See Rüppell, Syst. Ueb. Vög. N.-O. Afr., where this bird is figured, pl. 2. Mr. Gurney has sent us a series of *Accipiter badius* of India, and *A. brachydactylus* of West Africa, for comparison with the present species. These three birds and *A. polyzonoïdes*, Smith, of South Africa, are all certainly very closely allied; but we are not yet prepared to say that they may not be distinguished.—ED.

13. *CIRCUS CINERACEUS* (Mont.). (Montague's Harrier.)
14. *CIRCUS ÆRUGINOSUS* (Linn.). (Marsh Harrier.)
15. *SYRNIUM ALUCO* (Linn.). (Tawny Owl.)
16. *BRACHYOTUS PALUSTRIS* (Bp.). (Common Short-eared Owl.)

[In enumerating the authorities on the birds of Syria and Palestine, in reference to Mr. Tristram's article on the "Ornithology of Southern Palestine," in No. 1 of 'The Ibis' (*vide antea*, p. 38), we omitted to mention the name of the Marchese Orazio Antinori, who has made some interesting discoveries in the ornithology of those countries—*Cypselus galilaensis* and *Picus cruentatus*, described in 'Naumannia' (v. p. 307, and vi. p. 411). Mr. Gurney's present contribution towards our knowledge of the birds of this country gives us an opportunity of supplying this omission.—ED.]

XXXVIII.—*Descriptions of Six New Species of Birds.*

By DANIEL G. ELLIOT, of New York.

(Plate XIII.)

1. *THALASSIDROMA GRACILIS*, Elliot, sp. nov.

Nigro-fuliginosa, fascia alari pallidiore; uropygio abdomineque medio albis; rectricibus nigerrimis; cauda emarginata: rostro et tarsis gracillimis nigris.

Sp. Ch. Plumage sooty black. Quill feathers brown. Secondary coverts margined with light brown. Rump, upper tail-coverts, and middle of abdomen white. Tail black, the two outer feathers with a white mark on the lower half of the inner web, growing narrower as it ascends; lower half of the shafts white, the rest black. Under tail-coverts white, margined with black. Breast sooty. Bill black. Tarsi and feet very long and slender, black. Length 5·90; wing 5·22; tail 2·40; bill 0·40; tarsus 1·20.

Hab. West Coast of America.

Remarks. This species is very abundant on the coast of Chili, only coming to the mainland in the breeding-season. During that period, for a great part of the day and night they retire to the clefts of the rocks, taking flight only in the early morning. The